

City of Alamo Heights

## Residential Designs Standards Community Meeting

Presented By:  
Steve Waters, RDS Committee Chair  
July 14, 2011

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City of Alamo Heights

## RDS Community Meeting

**Background:**

- In 2005 Nore Winter, a Boulder CO-based consultant, was hired to develop design guidelines

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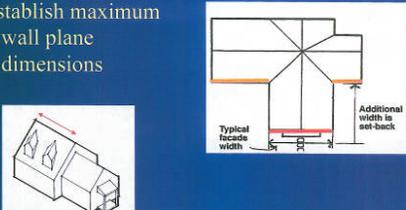
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City of Alamo Heights

## RDS Community Meeting

### Mass & Scale

Establish maximum wall plane dimensions



Neighborhood Conservation - In Alamo Heights, Texas

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City of Alamo Heights

## RDS Community Meeting

Maintain the line of building fronts in the block.

- A building should fit within the range of yard dimensions seen in the block.

Neighborhood Conservation in Alamo Heights, Texas

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City of Alamo Heights

## RDS Community Meeting

**Background (cont.):**

- Residential Design Standards were adopted in December 2006 based on the guidelines
- Time to revisit RDS to update
- 6 citizen committee members
- 2 Council members
- Have met 15 times since January

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City of Alamo Heights

**RDS Apply to SF-A and SF-B Districts only**

City of Alamo Heights  
Official Zoning Map

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## RDS Community Meeting

### **Background (cont.):**

#### Article III – Single-Family Dwelling District A (SF-A)

- Sec. 3-11 – Intent. Intent of development standards in SF-A District is to allow for flexibility of a structure’s mass and orientation based on lot size; and to ensure that properties undergoing redevelopment do not negatively impact the existing character and development patters along block faces on the neighborhood.

#### Article IV – Single-Family Dwelling District B (SF-B)

- Sec. 3-21 – Intent. Same as SF-A, plus . . . “and to promote a scale compatible with the existing built-environment.”

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## RDS Community Meeting

### **Guiding Principles:**

- “Tweak and balance”
- Simplify the code
- Provide additional design flexibility
- Incentivize desirable results
- Reduce redundancy and conflicts
- Compromise to balance diverse perspectives

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## RDS Community Meeting

### **Goals and Objectives:**

- Encourage sustainability
- Encourage preservation
- Limit height looming and “McMansions”
- Avoid legislating taste

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 City of Alamo Heights

## RDS Community Meeting

**Proposed Revisions:**

- Main Structures
  - Articulation
  - Setbacks
  - Max Height
- Accessory
  - Height looming
  - Setbacks (including distance from main structures)
- Overall
  - Floor-to-Area Ratio
  - Lot Coverage
  - Height calculation
  - Incentives

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 City of Alamo Heights

## Main Structures

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 City of Alamo Heights

## Main Structures

**Articulation:**

**Current**

- 3' offset every 30' to 35' of side and front wall, depending on lot width
  - **Issues:**
    1. Prescribes undesirable and relatively unusable "gash" in a wall
    2. Provides little flexibility

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 City of Alamo Heights

## Main Structures

**Articulation:**  
**Proposed**

- Consider allowing architectural and utilitarian features to count as articulation every 30' **or** have a minimum 2' x 10' offset in the wall plane
  - To include the examples on the following slides

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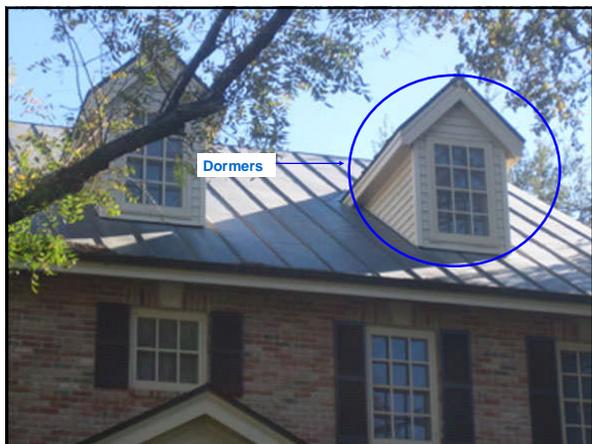
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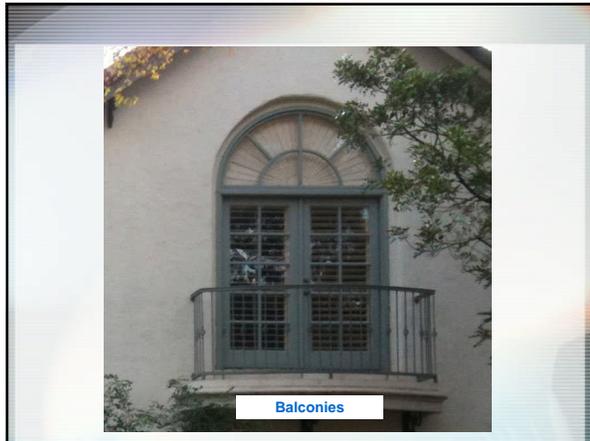
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 City of Alamo Heights

## Main Structures

**Setbacks:**

**Current**

- Side: Currently divided into 4 categories by lot width
  - Issue: Confusing and creates arbitrary hardships
- Rear: 30' and 35' depending on lot width
  - Issue: Limits site flexibility and contributes to "forcing" a 2<sup>nd</sup> story

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City of Alamo Heights

## Main Structures

### **Max Height:**

#### **Proposed**

- SF-A:
  - Lots 50' or less: 24' for 1st 15' and 28' max
  - Lots greater than 50' to 75': 26' and 32' max
  - Lots 75'+: 28' and 33' max

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City of Alamo Heights

## Main Structures

### **Max Height:**

#### **Proposed (cont.)**

- SF-B:
  - no change
  - Grant "bonuses" for:
    - 2' additional max ridge height if design utilizes a 1 to 1.5 height looming standard
    - 2' additional front max ridge height for 1<sup>st</sup> 15', if a substantial porch is provided

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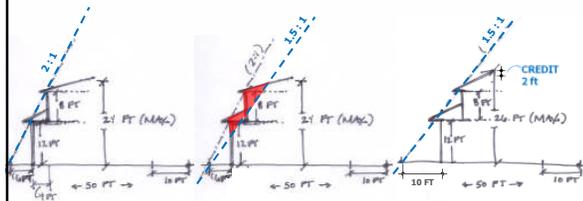
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City of Alamo Heights

## Maximum Height Incentive:

Proposed (for Main Structures)



COMPLIES

DOES NOT COMPLY

COMPLIES

Proposed ordinance:  
If building 1.5:1 ratio, grant an additional 2 ft in overall height.

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# Accessory Structures

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## Accessory structures

### Height Looming:

#### Current

- None
  - **Issues:**
    1. Concerns about 2-story accessory structures looming over neighbors

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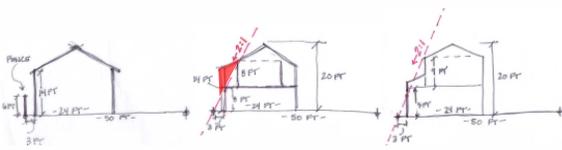
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## Accessory Structure:

Existing and Proposed (for 2-story)



COMPLIES  
(Existing)

DOES NOT COMPLY  
(Proposed)

COMPLIES  
(Proposed)

(First floor exempt up to maximum 10-ft plate)

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## Accessory structures

### **Height Looming:**

#### **Proposed**

- Match 2:1 standard for main structures on side and rear

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## Accessory structures

### **Setbacks:**

#### **Current**

- Rear: 5'
  - Issue: limits flexibility and yard
- Side: 3' to 5' depending on lot width
  - Issue: limits flexibility and yard
- Main and accessory separation: 10'
  - Issue: limits flexibility and yard

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## Accessory structures

### **Setbacks:**

#### **Proposed**

- Rear: 3'
- Side: 3'
- Main and accessory separation: 4'

#### **Conclusion**

- All contribute to more flexibility and more yard
- Height looming should address privacy concerns

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## Overall Standards

### **Floor-to-Area Ratio (FAR):**

#### **Proposed**

- .45\*
- Grant "bonuses" for:
  - Preservation of 50% or more of structure (.06 or 450 sf on a 7500 sf lot)
  - A stricter height looming standard of 1 to 1.5 (.02)

\*Note: Proposed .45 FAR based on analysis of 2007-2010 compatibility review projects

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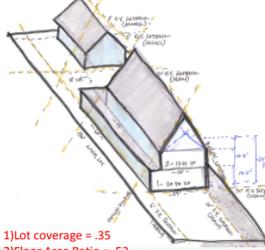
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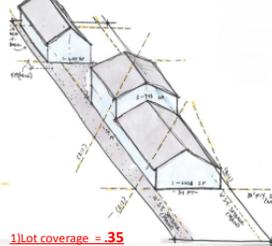
## Buildable Area:

### Existing



1<sup>st</sup> Floor Buildable Area: 2640 sf  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Buildable Area: 1344 sf  
Total Buildable Area: 3984 sf

### Proposed



1<sup>st</sup> Floor Buildable Area: 2625 sf  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Buildable Area: 750 sf  
Total Buildable Area: 3375 sf

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## Overall Standards

### **Lot Coverage:**

#### **Current**

- 35%
  - Issues: Tends to "force" buildings to 2-stories

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## Overall Standards

### Lot Coverage:

#### Proposed

- Keep it 35%
- But grant "bonus" for:
  - 5% additional lot coverage for pervious driveways

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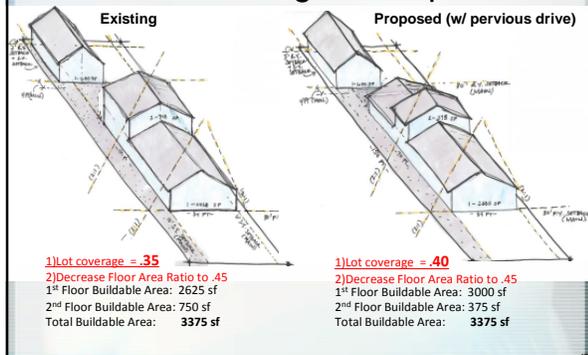
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## Lot Coverage Example




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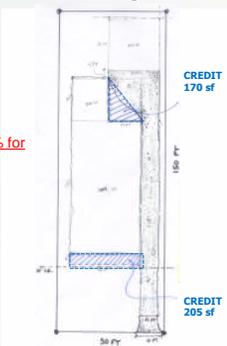
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## Lot Coverage Bonus

Existing Code:  
2625 sf lot coverage

Proposed Bonus (5% for  
pervious drive):  
3000 sf lot coverage




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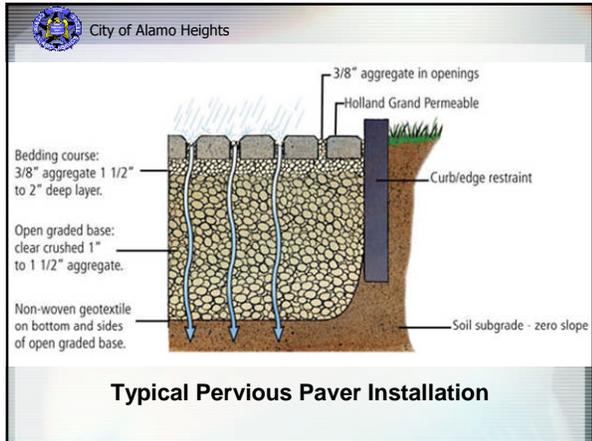
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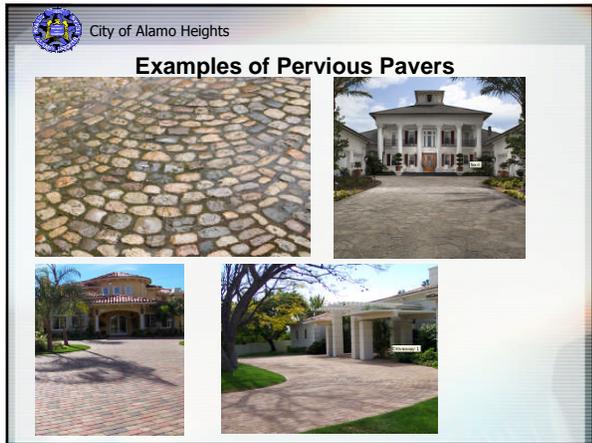
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## Overall Standards

### Height Calculation:

- **Current:** based on average grade for slope < 10% and actual for slope > 10%
  - **Issues:**
    1. Code is too complicated and misleading
    2. Allows extra height on down slope side
- **Proposed:** based on actual grade for all lots

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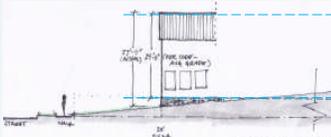
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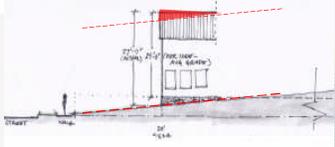


## Height Calculation

SIDE VIEW: < 10% SLOPE



COMPLIES  
(Current Code)



DOES NOT COMPLY  
(Proposed Code)

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## Incentive Summary

1. FAR bonus (.06) for preservation (.45 to .51)
2. FAR bonus (.02) for 1.5 to 1 height looming (.45 to .47)
3. Height bonus (2') for 1.5 to 1 height looming
4. Lot coverage bonus (5%) for pervious driveway
5. Porches can count as articulation
6. Substantial porches to allow for a 2' bonus in height for the front 15'

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City of Alamo Heights

## Additional Incentive

### 1. Stormwater Development Credit

- For reduction in overall impervious cover (\$\$.40 per sq. ft. fee reduction)

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City of Alamo Heights

## RDS Proposed Schedule

### **Next Steps\*:**

- 2 Community Meetings:
  - July 13<sup>th</sup>
  - July 14<sup>th</sup>
- Joint Board and Commission workshop:
  - TBD
- Planning and Zoning Commission public hearing
  - September 5, 2011 (tentative)
- 2 readings at City Council
  - September 12, 2011 (tentative)
  - September 26, 2011 (tentative)

\*All meetings are to begin at 5:30 p.m. in the City Council Chambers

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City of Alamo Heights

## Residential Designs Standards Community Meeting

Presented By:  
Steve Waters, RDS Committee Chair  
July 14, 2011

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City of Alamo Heights

# Backup Slides

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City of Alamo Heights

## Lot Widths

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City of Alamo Heights

## Compatibility Case Summary

CC Date	Demolition Address	Case #	Zone	FAO	Lot Area	Lot Sq. Ft.	Lot Width	# of Stories	Height	Photos	Notes	
1/15/2017	287 Northside	1707	SP-B	0.44	35,061	1,808	50	1	2	28.08		
1/15/2017	117 Travis	1707	SP-A	0.44	33,061	1,878	71	1	2	34.33		Storage height 10'
1/15/2017	700 Ogden	1707	SP-B	0.33	25,061	1,270	18	2	2	27.58		Height of 20' with lotting accessory structure
1/15/2017	105 Parkview	1807	SP-A	0.58	24,361	1,215	18	1	2	28.08		Height of 20' with lotting accessory structure
1/15/2017	18 Phoebe	1707	HFD	0.44	25,061	1,270		1	2	33.58		
1/15/2017	178 Diverse	1801	SP-A	0.47	30,061	1,401		1	10	38.08		
1/15/2017	312 Diverse	1801	SP-A	0.37	28,061	1,103	19	10	10	35.07		Height 2, 10' per middle row and 10' per garage structure & 10' from 10' per structure on attached garage
1/15/2017	222 Phoebe	2008	SP-A	0.33	18,061	1,145	15	10	10	34.58		Height 2, 10' per, 10' per per lot and 10' per garage structure on attached garage
1/15/2017	178 Phoebe	2108	SP-A	0.45	24,061	1,201	50	1	2	34.58		Height 2, 10' per, 10' per per lot and 10' per garage structure on attached garage

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City of Alamo Heights

Compatibility Case Summary

CC Case #	Proposed Address	Case #	Zoning	FAR	Lot Cov	Lot Sq. Ft.	Lot Width	# of Stories	Height	Photos	Notes
430009	137 Wilcox	2480	SF-A	0.49	35.82%	7,280	58	2 story - 1 story per	27.67		Denies 2 story per and 1 story building and requires 20' front setback and garage
430009	201 Regan	4908	SF-A	0.59	20.06%	15,207	79	2	2		Denies 2 story per and 1 story per for 2 story per and 1 story per
430009	35744	1849	SF-G	0.52	35.82%	6,080	58	1 story - 1 story	2 story - 1 story		Denies 1 story per and 1 story building per for 2 story per and 1 story per
430009	386 Redwood	6108	SF-A	0.34	27.82%	15,207	87	1 story per - 1 story	1 story per - 1 story		2 story building with 2 story building requires 20' front setback and 20' side setback
430009	638 Redwood	6108	SF-A	0.36	30.82%	14,504	79	1 story per - 1 story	1 story per - 1 story		Denies 1.5 SF-A with 1.5 story building requires 20' front setback, 20' side setback and 20' rear setback
430009	7700 W	6108	SF-G	0.53	20.82%	7,500	58	1 story per - 1 story	1 story per - 1 story		Denies 1.5 SF-A with 1.5 story building requires 20' front setback, 20' side setback and 20' rear setback
430009	2214 Canine	6108	SF-A	0.40	33.82%	7,500	58	1 story	1 story per		Denies 1.5 story per and 1 story building requires 20' front setback and 20' side setback
430009	881 Downe	6108	SF-A	0.40	34.82%	6,700	68	1 story - 1 story	1 story per - 1 story		
Average			0.42	30%	12,056	85			28.73		
			.45 in ColRegs		.38 in SF-A						

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